

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1961

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 12890

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, XG, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

PERSONAL FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR VOLPE

1. IN PREPARING FOR THE SINCE POSTPONED CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING IN LONDON LAST MONTH, I HAD THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATE FORUM TO DISCUSS WITH YOU THE GENERAL TREND OF ITALIAN THINKING ON WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR EUROPEAN UNITY. I NEED NOT ADD THAT THE EVENTS OF THE PAST SIX WEEKS WILL UNQUESTIONABLY HAVE AN EFFECT ON THIS THINKING. BUT WHAT THIS EFFECT WILL BE IS STILL VERY MUCH UNCERTAIN. INDEED, AND QUITE FRANKLY, THE EXPERIENCED ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS WITH WHOM MY STAFF DEALS AT THE SENIOR OFFICE DIRECTOR LEVEL ARE NONPLUSSED AT THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AND THE EFFECTS THEY PERCEIVE FROM THIS FOR THE ALLIANCE. I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ENGAGED IN SERIOUS CONSULTATIONS WITH A NUMBER OF OUR ALLIES DURING THE CRITICAL WAR PERIOD. I AM UNAWARE OF ANY SUCH CONSULTATIONS WITH THE ITALIANS. I REMAIN CONVINCED THAT IF WE HAD THEN IMPRESSED ON THEM THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE ISRAELI PLIGHT WE MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN MORE SUPPORT. AS IT WAS, THEY MADE DEMARCHES IN MOSCOW AND EASTERN EUROPE AT OUR REQUEST, THEY BUNKERED AN ISRAELI NAVAL SHIP, AND PERMITTED CERTAIN EL AL CHARTER FLIGHTS. WHEN JOE SISCO WAS HERE HE EMPHASIZED TO THE ITALIANS OUR SINCERE DESIRE TO CONSULT CLOSELY DURING THE CRITICAL MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS. MORO WAS MOST APPRECIATIVE. THE ITALIANS, I BELIEVE, REALLY EXPECT THAT AS OUR POLICY DEVELOPS WE WILL BE ABLE TO INFORM THE GOI PRIVATELY PRIOR TO PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND SECRET

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THAT ANY ITALIAN IDEAS WILL IN FACT RECEIVE CONSIDERATION BY US.

2. THESE OFFICIALS AND THEIR SUPERIORS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ARE AWAITING ANXIOUSLY THE DECEMBER MINISTERIAL TO LEARN OUR PERCEP-

TION OF WHERE NATO IS HEADING. THEY HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE LAST THING IN THE WORLD THE ITALIANS WISH IS THAT WE BECOME SO DISILLUSIONED WITH THE ALLIANCE THAT WE PERMIT IT TO BECOME MORIBUND AND PURSUE SOVIET AND CHINESE BILATERALISM, LEAVING THE EUROPEANS TO FOLLOW ALONE THE UNCERTAIN PATH TO EUROPEAN UNITY.

3. WHAT FOLLOWS IS THE PRESENTATION I HAD PLANNED TO MAKE AT LONDON. NATURALLY, I WOULD NOT BE ADVERSE TO RECEIVING YOUR COMMENTS ON IT.

WHILE TO A VERY LARGE DEGREE VAGUE AND UNFORMED, ITALIAN THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF EUROPE ARE ESSENTIAL TO AN APPRECIATION OF ITALIAN POSITIONS ON CURRENT ISSUES. THEIR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE PERMEATE AND AFFECT IN AN INCREASINGLY LARGER WAY THEIR ACTIONS IN THE EC, THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE EAST, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE US.

THE KEY ISSUES OF ITALY'S FOREIGN POLICY, IN ASCENDING ORDER OF PRIORITY, CURRENTLY ARE: WESTERN EFFORTS TO REACH MEANINGFUL DETENTE WITH THE WARSAW PACT, EUROPEAN RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR EUROPEAN UNITY.

IN ITALIAN EYES, WESTERN EFFORTS TOWARDS DETENTE ARE PRESENTLY CENTERED IN THE CSCE AND MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. THE ITALIANS ARE REALISTIC IN NOT PERCEIVING THE CSCE AS A PANACEA FOR MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. THEY HOPE IT WILL RESULT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE HUMANE CLIMATE FOR RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO BLOCS.

ON MBFR, THEY, ALONG WITH SOME OF THEIR EUROPEAN ALLIES, ARE CONCERNED THAT STRINGENT CONSTRAINTS MEASURES OR THE DESIGNATION OF A SPECIAL ARMS CONTROL ZONE IN CENTRAL EUROPE, WILL IMPEDE EUROPEAN EFFORTS TOWARDS DEFENSE COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION. NONETHELESS, THE ITALIANS HAVE GENERALLY SUPPORTED OUR MBFR POSITIONS.

ITALY CONSIDERS THE APRIL 23 "YEAR OF EUROPE" INITIATIVE BY THE SECRETARY AS THE MAINSPRING FOR CURRENT US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS.

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ITALIAN OFFICIALS HAVE FRANKLY ADMITTED THAT THE INITIATIVE SHOULD INDEED HAVE ORIGINATED IN EUROPE. THEY AGREE COMPLETELY THAT NEW PERSPECTIVES ARE NEEDED IN THIS ERA OF NEW REALITIES. THEY FORESEE THE DECLARATIONS EMERGING FROM THE ONGOING CONSULTATIONS AS BASIC POINTS OF REFERENCE FOR FUTURE US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS IN THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND DEFENSE SPHERES. THERE IS PRESENTLY, HOWEVER, A HIATUS AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL. TO BE FRANK THE KIND OF DECLARATIONS WE ARE LIKELY TO GET WILL PROBABLY DEPEND ON YOUR OWN EFFORTS AT BRUSSELS NEXT MONTH.

THE ITALIANS ARE AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE US AS A MEMBER OF NATO ON ONE HAND AND AS A MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY ON THE OTHER. THEY SEEK TO CONCILIATE THE

UNITED STATES WITHIN THE ALLIANCE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME THEY ARE FORCED TO LOOK TO THEIR OWN ESSENTIAL INTERESTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, WHERE CONCRETE ACTIONS AFFECTING PARTICULAR POLITICAL GROUPS ARE CONTINUALLY IN PROCESS. THIS PUTS THE ITALIANS IN OPPOSITION TO US ON SPECIFIC ISSUES. MOREOVER, THEY REALIZE THAT THE NATURE OF THE COMMUNITY PROCESS MEANS THAT A TOUGH STAND AGAINST ITS EC PARTNERS ON ISSUES WHERE US AND ITALIAN INTERESTS CONVERGE -- E.G., AGRICULTURE -- MAKES IT HARDER FOR ITALY TO GET ACCOMMODATION IN THE COMMUNITY IN OTHER AREAS. THEREFORE, THE ITALIANS TEND TO PLAY THESE QUESTIONS IN A LOW KEY. THUS, INTRA-COMMUNITY LOGROLLING ACCOUNTS IN PART FOR THE INDECISIVE ITALIAN POSITIONS ON MANY QUESTIONS WHICH APPEAR TO BE OF MUTUAL INTEREST. MOREOVER, THE ITALIANS DISLIKE BEING ISOLATED, PREFER CONSENSUS POLITICS, AND DO NOT BLEED AND DIE FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS, MUCH LESS THOSE OF A THIRD PARTY, E.G., THE US. FINALLY, THE ITALIANS SEE THEIR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN THE COMMUNITY AS COMPLEMENTING THEIR POLITICAL AND SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE ALLIANCE. THE IDEA OF A COMMUNITY WHICH BY ITS BEHAVIOR THREATENS THE ALLIANCE APPALLS THEM, AND ACCOUNTS FOR THEIR RECENT SPATE OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY ON BEHALF OF US-EC RELATIONS.

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AGAINST THIS BACKDROP OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES, THE ITALIANS LOOK FORWARD TO A EUROPE UNITED, IN SOME FASHION, POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY, AND MILITARILY. THEY NOTE THE PROGRESS THE EC HAS MADE TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON ECONOMIC POLICIES. THEY PERCEIVE THE MEETINGS AT THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS LEVEL AS A PRECEDENT FOR THE FUTURE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE INTEGRATION OF POLITICAL POLICIES. AND THEY ARE HOPEFUL THAT SOME MECHANISM CAN BE FOUND TO ENTICE THE FRENCH INTO MEANINGFUL DISCUSSIONS ON EUROPEAN DEFENSE PROBLEMS. REGULAR MEETINGS AT THE SUMMIT MIGHT ACHIEVE THIS EVENTUALLY.

WHILE PLEASED WITH THE PROGRESS TO DATE OF THE EUROPEAN UNIFICATION PROCESS, THE ITALIANS HAVE NO CLEAR PERCEPTION OF THE FORM IT WILL ULTIMATELY TAKE. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, THEY SUSPECT A FEDERAL STRUCTURE IS UNLIKELY GIVEN THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND HIS-

TORICAL FACTORS THAT IMPINGE ON FRANCE'S AND THE UK'S VIEW OF THEIR SOVEREIGNTY. BY IMPLICATION, ITALY AND THE FRG, WHOSE UNIFICATION WAS MORE RECENT, AND THE SMALLER EUROPEAN NATIONS WOULD BE MORE AMENABLE TO SACRIFICING THEIR SOVEREIGNTY FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF A UNITED EUROPE.

ON THE MILITARY SIDE, THE FUTURE IS EVEN MORE MURKY. UNLIKE THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SPHERES, EVEN THE INITIAL LINES HAVE NOT AS YET BEEN DRAWN. DESPITE THIS VAGUENESS AND FRENCH INTRANSIGENCE HERETOFORE, THE ITALIANS BELIEVE THE INITIAL STEPS TOWARDS MILITARY INTEGRATION NEED NOT AWAIT POLITICAL COHESION AS THE FRENCH HAVE STATED PUBLICLY; THE TWO COULD PROCEED SIMULTANEOUSLY.

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THE ITALIANS HAVE FEW DEFINITE IDEAS ON THE SPECIFICS OF MILITARY INTEGRATION. THEY FORESEE THE NEED FOR SOME TYPE OF UNIFIED COMMAND STRUCTURE. ONE THOUGHT THAT HAS BEEN FLOATED WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH A DEPUTY TO SACEUR FOR EUROPEAN FORCES. THE ITALIANS ALSO SEE SOME POSSIBILITY OF MILITARY SPECIALIZATION -- ALONG THE LINES OF RECENT DUTCH PROPOSALS -- AND PROCUREMENT OF HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY SO AS TO OFFSET MANPOWER DEFICIENCIES. THEY ALSO BELIEVE THAT A EUROPEAN FORCE WILL REQUIRE A NUCLEAR COMPONENT. WHILE AN INTEGRATED MULTILATERAL NUCLEAR FORCE WOULD BE MOST DESIRABLE, THE ITALIANS SEEM PREPARED TO RELY ON THE INDEPENDENT, NATIONALLY CONTROLLED BRITISH AND FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCES AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED FOR THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE FORCES' NUCLEAR CAPABILITY. WHETHER THE ITALIANS WOULD BE WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY TO THE MAINTENANCE OF SUCH A FORCE AND TO WHAT DEGREE THEY WOULD INSIST UPON HAVING A FINGER ON THE TRIGGER REMAIN TO BE SEEN. BUT ONE THING IS CLEAR: THE ITALIANS OPPOSE THE CREATION OF A "THIRD FORCE" TOTALLY INDEPENDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. THEY FORESEE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE FORCE, CLOSELY LINKED TO THE US, AS THE MOST MEANINGFUL FORM OF BURDENSARING. (WITH REGARD TO THE NUCLEAR ASPECT, THE GOI HAS BEEN HEARTENED BY THE RECENT REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE NINE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY WHICH ENDORSED THE CONCEPT OF A EUROPEAN NUCLEAR FORCE AND, PARTICULARLY, BY THE FACT THAT IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NON ILL-RECEIVED IN THE US.)

THE ITALIANS ARE UNCLEAR ON HOW THIS EUROPEAN FORCE WOULD RELATE TO US FORCES. A KEY FACTOR WOULD BE THE SIZE OF US FORCES STILL STATIONED IN EUROPE. THEY FEEL VERY STRONGLY, HOWEVER, THAT US AND EUROPEAN DEFENSE EFFORTS MUST IN SOME FASHION BE FULLY COORDINATED.

4. COMMENT: IF THE FOREGOING ITALIAN VIEWS ARE SHARED BY SOME OF OUR OTHER EUROPEAN ALLIES, IT SEEMS TO ME THERE MAY BE SOME MERIT IN OUR PLAYING A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE UNIFICATION PROCESS. IN ASSESSING WHAT THIS ROLE SHOULD BE, THE FIRST QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED, OF COURSE, IS WHETHER WE DO IN FACT FAVOR A EUROPE UNIFIED POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY, AND MILITARILY. FULLY RECOGNIZ-

ING THE SHORT-TERM DISADVANTAGES OF THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN UNIFICATION, I CANNOT HELP BUT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE LONG RUN. WITHOUT IT, IF US FORCES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY DRAWN DOWN, EUROPE WOULD BE MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO
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USSR PRESSURES FOR ACCOMMODATION. (I ACCEPT AS A GIVEN THAT A SIZEABLE US PRESENCE IN EUROPE WILL NOT BE A VIABLE US DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROPOSITION IN THE 1980'S.) IF THIS JUDGMENT IS CORRECT, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL ISSUES WE WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH IS THE CONCEPT OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE FORCE, AND, SPECIFICALLY, THE NUCLEAR COMPONENT THEREOF. FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, WE COULD REAP CERTAIN POLITICAL ADVANTAGES BY FACING THE ISSUE SQUARELY NOW AND OFFERING TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF GREATER SHARING OF OUR MILITARY NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. AS A MINIMUM, THIS SHOULD ASSIST IN OUR CURRENT DIFFICULTIES WITH FRANCE OVER HER PERCEPTION THAT A DICHOTOMY EXISTS BETWEEN A EUROPEAN IDENTITY AND A TRANS-ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP. IMPLICIT IN ANY AGREEMENT ON OUR PART TO WORK POSITIVELY FOR A UNIFIED EUROPE WOULD BE OUR INSISTENCE THAT OUR SUPPORT BE PREDICATED ON A CONTINUED ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP FOCUSED ON NATO. A EUROPE GROPING FOR AN IDENTITY AND EVENTUAL UNIFICATION WITHOUT THE ANCHOR OF OUR PRESENT ALLIANCE RELATIONSHIP PRESAGES TOO MANY UNCERTAINTIES (INDEED DANGERS) FOR US POLICY. VOLPE

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